

# HOME MISSION LESSON,

ISSUED BY THE

## WOMEN'S BAPTIST HOME MISSION SOCIETY.

PREPARED BY

MARY G. BURDETTE, Corresponding Secretary, 2411 Indiana Ave., Chicago, Ill.

### *Lesson V. Mexico—Its Past, Present and Future.*

Mexico has been described as our next-door neighbor, lying broadside to our country on the southwest, having a government similar in many respects to our own, bound to us by connecting lines of railroad and by close commercial relations, and, moreover, embraced in the motto of the American Baptist Home Mission Society—"North America for Christ."

1. In the beginning it may be well to listen to a general description of the country.

Mexico is a republic, comprising twenty-seven states, one territory, and a federal district, including an area of more than 750,000 square miles. Of this great tract of country, the portion lying south of the Tropic of Cancer is by far the most populous, and is rich in both mineral and vegetable productions. The regions north of the tropic become less populous in proceeding northward, and many districts are almost unknown, being inhabited only by tribes of wild Indians.

The surface is extremely varied, and to this circumstance, nearly as much as to the difference in latitude of the parts of so extensive a country, may be attributed the variety of climate for which it is distinguished.

The vast tract between the Sierra Madre on the west, and the Cordilleras on the east, comprises about three-fifths of the area of the country, and consists of table-land, known as the plateau of Anahuac, with an elevation above the sea-level of from 6,000 to 8,000 feet. Hence, though a portion of this region lies within the tropics, it enjoys a temperate climate.

The most remarkable tract in this elevated region is the plain of Tenochtitlan, surrounded by ridges of rocks. It is of oval shape, fifty-five miles long, and thirty-seven broad. One hundred and sixty square miles of this area are water. Its southwest side is highest, and here is seen Popocatapetl and other mountain peaks, towering from 13,000 to nearly 18,000 feet above the level of the sea.

Mexico is divided, as respects climate, into the hot regions along the coast, the temperate regions, and the cold regions. The hot regions include the land under 2,000 feet of elevation, the temperate regions those from 2,000 to 5,000 feet, and the cold regions those above 5,000 feet of altitude. Owing to its diversity of climate, Mexico produces most of the plants peculiar to the tropics, as well as those of the temperate regions of North America and Europe.

2. What do we know of the primitive inhabitants of Mexico?

The first settlers in Mexico are said to have been the Toltecs, a tribe of Indians from the Rocky Mountains, who, after several migrations, fixed themselves near the present City of Mexico, and flourished there for about four hundred years. They imparted some degree of civilization to the barbarous Chichemecas, who succeeded them, and were, in their turn, displaced by the Aztecs, who flourished in 1160. They founded the city of Tenochtitlan (on the site of the present City of Mexico) in 1325, and under Montezuma I., the greatest of their monarchs, extended their dominion on the east to the Gulf of Mexico, and on the west to the Pacific Ocean. They were subjugated by the Spaniards in 1519.

3. A brief account of this conquest will be of interest.

Good Friday (April 21), 1519, records the landing of Cortez with six hundred Spaniards, at the spot where Vera Cruz now stands. Between the invader and Tenochtitlan, the capital of the empire, which he coveted for the crown of Spain, lay the Indian republic of Tlascala. The Spaniards having promptly attacked and defeated the Tlascalans, set about winning their friendship, with such good results that they became zealous and faithful allies. Thus reinforced, Cortez continued his march toward the Aztec capital.

When Cortez emerged from the mountain gorge, and looked down on the entire city, he beheld a magnificent lake extending for miles, while from islands, seeming to float on the sparkling bosom of the water, rose temples, palaces, obelisks, mansions, and all the belongings of a vast empire, while broad highways, like Roman roads, connected this second Venice with the adjacent shore; and green islands, like nodding orchards, with fruit of all colors and sizes, with huts and villages, parents and children, sailed slowly toward the great mart, with fruits, flowers, fish, vegetables, and game.

Montezuma II., the last of the Aztec monarchs, had in earlier life distinguished himself as a general, and at the time of his election, in 1502, held the office of high priest. But sensual indulgences had so undermined his health and enervated his character, that he became timid and superstitious. The apparition of a comet in 1512 caused great alarm in his kingdom, and was affirmed by a neighboring king to forebode disaster from



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the arrival of foreigners; a warning which seemed to find confirmation in the invasion of the Spaniards. The alarm was increased by reports of the prowess of the invaders, and of the superhuman terrors of the arms which they wielded. Montezuma sought, therefore, to conciliate them, sending presents and complimentary messages, and finally meeting them with a magnificent cortege, and conducting them to his capital, where they received the most courteous treatment. The lavish presents, indicating great wealth, stimulated the cupidity of the Spaniards, and the sight of idolatrous rites, especially the human sacrifices, inflamed their religious zeal, while the ambition of Cortez would be satisfied with nothing short of absolute conquest; and after a desperate struggle, in which the Mexicans suffered immense losses by the sword, fire, and famine, the surrender came, and the vast empire became subject to the crown of Spain.

4. What may be said of the civilization of the Mexicans at the time of the conquest?

When the Spaniards arrived in Mexico, civilization had so far advanced that among the Aztecs the right of property was understood, cities were built, professions and distinctions of rank existed, and the arts were cultivated with considerable success, as is evidenced by their paintings, architecture, and sculpture. They also cultivated oratory and poetry, but used hieroglyphics to record their history. Most of these annals were destroyed, but some interesting specimens were allowed to remain.

5. What can you say of the present population of Mexico?

The present population of Mexico numbers not far from thirteen and one-half millions of people. Of these, more than two millions are whites, the descendants of Europeans, chiefly Spaniards; about five millions are full-blood Indians, and the remaining six millions are mixed races.

6. What is known of the religions of Mexico?

The primitive inhabitants were highly superstitious, and worshiped a number of deities, also offered human beings in sacrifice, a practice of which numerous evidences remain.

The natives were nominally converted to Romanism by the Spanish soldiers, who were possessed with fiery zeal for their church. The proselyting was done after the usual manner of the age in which the conquest was effected, by force of arms. As a result, what is now in Mexico called "Catholicism," is described as a superstitious, debased idolatry, grafted onto a spurious sort of Romanism.

The Indians and largely the mixed population are almost as ignorant and superstitious as in the days of Cortez. The work of transforming them into intelligent Christians is a great undertaking.

7. What encouragement have Protestant Christians to persevere in their efforts to preach the gospel in Mexico?

The evidence that the people are progressive: "They have established reform as the

rule for government, and freedom of conscience as the right of all. To do this they had to shatter the gigantic power of Spain years since, and still more monstrous lordship of the popish hierarchy forty years later."

Less than a score of years ago it was not safe for a Protestant to labor for the conversion of the Roman Catholics; now he can go anywhere in Mexico and labor with little fear of harm.

Mexican converts are still more or less liable to petty persecution of a kind that causes them humiliation and annoyance; but in the past, on more than one occasion, Romish fury has broken out in acts of open violence that have cost many brave lives. In all, there have been eighty-three martyrs.

At the present time there are operating in Mexico eleven Protestant denominations, which began their work in the following order

(1) American Baptist Home Mission Society, 1863; (2) Episcopalian, 1869; (3) Friends, 1871; (4) Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions, 1872; (5) Methodist Episcopal, 1873; (6) Methodist Episcopal South, 1873; (7) Presbyterian South, 1874; (8) Associate Reformed Presbyterian South, 1880; (9) A. B. C. F. M. (Congregational), 1882; (10) Southern Baptist Convention, 1883; (11) Cumberland Presbyterian, 1888.

The Methodist (North and South) and the Presbyterian (North) are the strongest missions. In educational work the Northern Methodists and Presbyterians lead. Various estimates are given as to the total membership in evangelical churches in Mexico, but it seems safe to place it in round numbers at 20,000. While we praise God for this great company, what is our duty concerning the more than 13,570,545 unevangelized Mexicans? (Census of 1900.)

## THE BAPTISTS IN MEXICO.

(The following matter may be given by one person in the form of a paper, if such a presentation should be considered preferable to the one here given.)

1. What may be said of the beginning of Baptist work in Mexico?

Ans.—As early as 1836 the Executive Committee directed attention to Mexico as a coming field of missionary effort, in these words:

"On the south are Texas and the Republic of Mexico, now both, perhaps, certainly the latter, inaccessible to the Christian missionary; but their portals will undoubtedly be thrown wide open as soon as we shall be in circumstances to enter them."

In 1840 Secretary Hill refers to the first glimmer of hope in the establishment of the Republic of Texas within the ancient domain of Mexico, and in the immigration of Americans and Englishmen into Mexico, and Christians were exhorted to be ready for the forward movement when the hour came.

In 1869 we find these words in the report of the board: "God, in His providence, has opened to us a way into the very heart of this papal land. The Catholic Church party and the liberal party have been struggling



for the mastery in Mexico for many years past. At length the church party has had to yield. A constitution granting liberty of worship has been adopted and now prevails. As a result, we hear with a joy that thrills us, that six small congregations, holding essentially the principles of the Baptists, have already organized themselves and are worshiping our Lord Jesus Christ in the way which Rome calls heresy. We deem it imperative to send two or more men to that field at the earliest moment possible."

2. What do we know of the history of these six congregations and subsequent development of the work?

*Ans.*—In the spring of 1862, John W. Butler, an Englishman of great piety, came to Monterey from Texas. Through his influence Thomas M. Westrup, a young Englishman by birth, engaged in mercantile pursuits in that city, was led to faith in Christ. About the same time there dwelt in Matamoras, Rev. James Hickey, a Baptist minister, who, at the solicitation of Mr. Butler and Mr. Westrup, visited Monterey in November, 1862. As a result, Mr. Westrup and two Mexicans were baptized January 30, 1864, and the same day the first Baptist church was organized with five members. Mr. Westrup was chosen pastor, Mr. Hickey laying on hands in prayer. By the end of 1864 this church numbered twenty members, and by 1869 there were in Mexico, as has already been stated, six congregations, with about one hundred and twenty immersed believers.

The American Baptist Home Mission Society accepted the fostering care of these little bands, with Mr. Westrup as their missionary, until 1876, when the debt of the society enforced an economy that compelled them to leave these Mexican churches mainly to themselves until 1880. *Indeed, the only support these churches had during four years was that secured by a few heroic Christian women who banded together October 21, 1874, as "The Mexican Baptist Mission Society."* In 1880, when the Baptist Home Mission Society again resumed the care of this work, there were in Mexico five Baptist churches and eight congregations. We had a Baptist church at Monterey five years before any attempt was made by any other body to evangelize Mexico.

3. What can you say of the present condition of the Missions of the Northern Baptists?

Under the fostering care of the *American Baptist Home Mission Society* there were in Mexico in 1903, 10 churches, with a membership of 700. There were also out-stations. Fifteen missionaries are employed by the Society to care for this work. The Society also sustains two schools, one in Mexico City, and one at Monterey, in which eight teachers are employed. The money for the support of the schools is raised by the Woman's American Baptist Home Mission Society.

The monthly paper, *La Luz*, is published in the city of Mexico, and from the press there are also issued tracts and leaflets. A

hymn book, published by the *American Baptist Publication Society*, was prepared by Rev. T. M. Westrup.

4. Give some account of the work of the Southern Baptists in Mexico.

*Ans.*—In 1880 the eyes of the Board of the Southern Baptist Convention turned to Mexico, and Rev. J. O. Westrup was appointed as its first representative in this field. The facts of his tragic death are known to the Missionary Baptists of the United States. Brother Flourney was the second, and Brother W. D. Powell the third appointee of the Board. In 1883 Brother Powell began work in Saltillo. At Záratecas and Guadalajara, missions were organized in 1887. In 1903 the Southern Baptists reported 43 churches with 1,251 members. They also have schools at Saltillo and Toluca and a Theological Training School at Torreon.

5. May we hear a few words concerning the missionaries sent by the Women's Baptist Home Mission Society to carry the Gospel to Mexico?

In September, 1884, *Paula Barocio* entered the training school to prepare herself for missionary work among her people, the Mexicans. She came to us from Montemorelos, strongly urged to do so by Rev. Thomas Westrup. After a year in the training school, Miss Barocio was appointed to labor in Montemorelos, Mexico. Accompanying Paula Barocio to the training school was *Epifania Trevino*, a typical Spanish señorita, who did excellent service in Monterey as our missionary during two years, when she became the wife of Mr. Albino E. Martinez. Paula Barocio served the society with marked efficiency until December 21, 1892, when she married and accompanied her husband, Rev. R. W. Tooms, to Aguas Calientes. In September, 1894, she was re-commissioned for service in Queretaro, where she and her husband were then residing. This engagement terminated September, 1895, with her removal to Montemorelos, where she again labored from March, 1896, till October, 1897, when she left Mexico to join her husband in Las Vegas, N. M., where she began work in April, 1898. In November, 1902, she returned to Mexico and since May, 1903, has been associated with Misses Bristol and Galvan in the work at Puebla.

*Concepcion Renteria* was chosen to fill the vacancy occasioned by the marriage of Epifania Trevino, in October, 1887. After six years of faithful and fruitful service, she entered heaven October 21, 1893. *Roseltha Powell*, from West Virginia, graduated from the training school in 1889, and was sent to Monterey, Mexico, the following February. She resigned April 1, 1892, and soon after became the wife of Dr. Head. *Teresa Leal* was first employed as Bible woman to assist Miss Barocio in Montemorelos, and was transferred to Aguas Calientes, January 1, 1893; in October following, she was sent to San Luis Potosi. In September, 1900, she went to Cuernavaca.

*Viviana Trevino* and *Lillia Garcia* entered the training school in October, 1889, and were graduated June 11, 1891. Miss Viviana Trevino began work as a general missionary.



August 1, 1891, with headquarters at Santa Rosa, but after Miss Powell's marriage her headquarters were removed to Monterey until May 1, 1893, when she was sent to Puebla. In April, 1894, she resigned her commission to become the wife of Rafael S. Fernandez. Miss Lillia Garcia began work at Lampazos September 1, 1891, but was transferred in August, 1892, to Montemorelos, and in July, 1895, to Aguas Calientes, and in September, 1896, to Monterey, where she labored until April, 1897. *Mrs. Francisca Marquez* began work in Linares, June 20, 1893, as a Bible woman and visitor.

Miss Susan Jones, of Jacksonville, Ill., and of the training school class of 1893, reached the City of Mexico November 5th of that year, and was joined by Miss Esther Galvan the following month. Miss Galvan came to the training school from Monterey, and graduated with Miss Jones. Her interest in Christian work and place among the workers is, in part at least, the fruit of Miss Powell's labors. September, 1895, Miss Galvan was transferred to Monterey. Miss *Francisca Salas* (Mexican) began work in the City of Mexico as Miss Jones' assistant in August, 1896.

November 17, 1896, Clara B. Hardy and Miss Esther Galvan reached Puebla, where they were to be associated in service, but January 9, 1897, Miss Hardy entered heaven, and Miss Galvan continued alone until the arrival of Miss Jennie G. Bristol, November, 1897. Miss Addie H. Watts reached Monterey, November 11, 1896. April 1, 1897, she was transferred to San Luis Potosi. The following October she was obliged to return home for medical treatment, hoping soon to go back, but the hope was unrealized.

February 20, 1899, a kindergarten was opened in the City of Mexico. In August, 1900 Miss Bessie Richards, took charge of this work, and in December, 1902, it was transferred to San Luis Potosi.

In November, 1902, Miss Viola Still and Miss Elizabeth Haney, both graduates of the training school, reached Aguas Calientes, where they were joined by Miss Luz Heath, also commissioned for this field. But their stay here was short as in March of the same year they were transferred to San Luis Potosi. Miss Heath was sent to the City of Mexico and Miss *Francisca Salas* brought from that city to Aguas Calientes.

Senora Manuela Vargas began work as a Bible woman in Nuevo Laredo, October, 1902.

#### THE DAY DAWN IN MEXICO.

The dedication of the First Baptist Church edifice in Mexico occurred at Monterey, April 19, 1885, and was attended by 127 excursionists from the United States. The builder of the house, a Roman Catholic, who was excommunicated by the bishop on that account, was presented with a gold medal as a token of appreciation of those for whom he had wrought in the face of the displeasure of his church.

The *City of Mexico* was occupied by the

American Baptist Home Mission Society in 1883, but during nearly four years the work was carried on with no house suitable for church or Sunday school purposes, the services being held in a cheerless room, for which the missionary paid \$90 per month, and from which he was liable to be driven at any time at the caprice of the Roman Catholic landlord. During the year 1886, pledges amounting to \$25,000 were secured for the erection of Baptist Mission buildings in the City of Mexico, and February 26, 1887, ground was broken for the first Protestant church edifice ever erected in that city. The buildings consist of a church edifice on the American plan; the printing press and the missionary's residence are in a separate edifice. The buildings were completed and dedicated November 27, 1887.

In 1836 it was written: "It is a beautiful anticipation that the banner of the true cross may yet be planted in the city of Monte-zuma, and the blessings of the gospel diffused through this land, which has experienced nothing from her misnamed Christianity but treachery and cruelty and horrid barbarity."

Scarce fifty years had passed, when the anticipation had become a reality.

We listened to Dr. William Haigh's inspiring account of his visit to Mexico at the time of the dedication of the new Baptist meeting house at Monterey, and the organization of the Nueva Leon Association. He described thrillingly the blending of the voices of Germans, English, and Spaniards in songs of praise, each singing in his own tongue but at the same time; and painted for us in vivid word-pictures the Mexican sisters asking and receiving hearty recognition as one with the brethren in Him in whom there is neither male nor female. Then he told how he had gone to the cathedral in the gray dawn of the morning, and amid the gloomy shadows, discerned the forms of women prostrating themselves in ignorant devotion on cold stones, muttering prayers and crossing themselves, while a priest, standing in the dim light of a taper, mumbled in Latin the morning service, which few heard and none understood. "Here," said the doctor, "I beheld a picture of Mexico as she has been, blinded and deluded by Romanism. Aye, a picture of Mexico as she is. For as the day was dawning in the natural world, and the sun was even then hastening his approach, so I saw there a reaching out after God, and believe the gospel is beginning to scatter the gloom. Aye, more. As I turned me from the scene to the one of the day before, and contrasted those ignorant, degraded women with the sisters whom Christianity has made intelligent and comely, I saw a picture of the Mexico of the future, when the Sun of Righteousness shall have arisen, and when Christian light shall flood the land."

Mexico is open to the gospel. Let us thank God, and this not alone for the sake of Mexico, but remembering that this is also the "gateway to forty millions of people farther south who speak the beautiful language of Castile."

